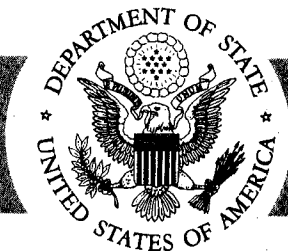


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November 10, 1970

EUROPEAN SPACE CONFERENCE SPLITS ON POST-APOLLO COOPERATION

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① At a meeting in Paris November 3-4, the European Space Conference (ESC), the governing body of ELDO and ESRO, split into three groups on the issue of whether to participate in the funding and construction of an important element in the US post-Apollo manned space program. France, Germany, and Belgium opted strongly for such participation. Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands expressed interest in further efforts to obtain US launchers in the context of the post-Apollo program but were unwilling to make any commitment. The remaining countries (Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Australia), led by the UK, stated they could not join an effort where the costs and benefits were unclear.

Although the UK has persistently reflected lack of enthusiasm towards the proposed project, the British position expressed in the ESC meeting--perhaps not fully reflecting London's coordinated views--was more negative than had been anticipated. Apparently the British stand was based on UK space-funding stringencies, confidence that access to American launch facilities and technology would be forthcoming in any case, and the uncertainty of US Congressional authorization for the proposed post-Apollo program funding. The more positive aspect of the ESC meeting was the decision of the three delegations to move ahead. They and others from

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the second (uncommitted) group plan to send delegates to Washington (perhaps accompanied by observers from the UK and Scandinavia) later this year, to discuss further specific details of the cooperative venture.

NASA is planning a \$10 billion ten-year space-research program which will comprise a space transportation system including (a) earth orbiting space stations, (b) shuttle ferries from earth to these orbiting stations, and (c) tugs to provide transport in space from station-to-station and to the moon. As proposed to the Europeans in mid-September, they are invited to participate to the extent of a projected \$1 billion input. A possible role for the Europeans would be the development of the space tug. In a letter of October 2, 1970, to M. Theo Lefevre, Belgian Minister of Science and Chairman of the ESC, Under Secretary Johnson responded in detail to a series of questions posed by M. Lefevre and his colleagues when they visited Washington in mid-September to discuss this project. These replies aimed to reassure the Europeans as to (1) availability of launch services and launch vehicles; (2) decision-making; and (3) access to information and facilities. On the basis of the September visit and the Johnson letter, the ESC meeting in early November took up where to go from there.

While the US offer to the Europeans focuses on participation by all or part of the ESC, it leaves open the possibility of individual country participation. This would call for individual adherence to a convention to cooperate on the project and a pledge of substantial participation on the basis of a specific formula in each case. While not entirely resolved, access to technology, either in the case of an ESC group or

individual countries, would be proportionate to the specific contribution and to the extent necessary to share in the overall management and planning decisions on a "need to know" basis.

The element in the US offer which is of greatest interest to the Europeans, however, is the assurance of launch services. The French and Germans are particularly anxious to launch a European communications satellite, which would probably duplicate certain aspects of the current INTELSAT communications satellites over the North Atlantic. Having had difficulty in ELDO developing a non-US rocket to launch such a satellite, the Europeans desire to obtain one from the US with no strings attached. While other launches by the US would presently be permitted, the US position would not permit providing communications satellite launch facilities without a favorable decision in this regard in INTELSAT in conformity with procedures under the INTELSAT agreement.

As Britain is neither concerned with building nor joining construction of a communications satellite outside of INTELSAT, there is less incentive for the UK to participate in an ESC post-Apollo consortium. If the British decision not to participate stands, this could have important implications both in the European setting and in Anglo-American terms. Some Europeans, especially the French and Belgians, have indicated that the UK position would be a test of Britain's desire to join Europe. While this is obviously an over-dramatization of the effect of British aloofness, the latter would not contribute to increased confidence as to UK intentions to cooperate with the continent.

As concerns Anglo-American cooperation, the UK might well consider that access to US launch facilities and technology unrelated to communications satellites would be available on a bilateral basis in line with past practice. This might pose problems for the US not only with regard to Britain but also in the case of other countries not collaborating in the post-Apollo program, such as Japan. In particular, if the pro-cooperation ESC members contribute funds to the project and take on important development responsibilities, then the US would face the problem of deciding whether to provide equal access to US facilities and technology to the second or third group of ESC members, or to non-members with which the US has cooperated bilaterally in the Sixties. This question would need to be resolved separately and apart from the overriding issue of whether to provide communications satellite facilities for the European participants.

One uncertainty in the post-Apollo equation is whether the Administration and the Congress will continue to support the proposed program. It has been made clear to the Europeans that the FY-71 NASA Authorization Act, which contains \$110 million for studies of the shuttle/station concepts, is still pending in the Congress. Slippage in passage of this legislation would set back US-European space cooperation on the broad scale outlined above. Bilateral cooperative efforts would, of course, continue, but these would fall considerably short of the mutual commitment and interdependence envisaged in the post-Apollo program. If the latter proceeds and if the Europeans participate, we would depend heavily upon their performance in delivering an operational tug, without which the space transport system

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Would fall short of its full potential. The Europeans would depend upon us to provide the necessary launch capability and other technology; they would, conversely, rely on sales opportunities in the US for any subsystems they produce.

Regardless of whether post-Apollo cooperation materializes, for the Europeans a wider technological and political question would also arise: Should they continue to develop an independent space launch capability or put these funds into US-launch capability? ELDO's difficulties in developing an independent space launch capability might well persuade the Europeans that--subject to satisfactory communications satellite ownership, management, and operation--they should opt for joint US-European cooperation. A positive decision by the US Government to proceed with the post-Apollo program and European agreement to participate in it would edge the Europeans considerably closer to such a joint launching option.

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